



News Release

For Immediate Release: October 16, 2018

Durham Makes Improvements to Downtown's Black Wall Street Gardens

Two-Week Construction Project Begins October 17

DURHAM, N.C. – Visitors and pedestrians to downtown Durham's [Black Wall Street Gardens](#) will soon notice some improvements to this City of Durham-owned green space.

The City is making lighting, landscaping, and walkway improvements to this space, located at 102 West Main Street, which will close this green space for approximately two weeks beginning on Wednesday, October 17. During this two-week construction timeframe, pedestrians are asked to use the adjacent sidewalks along North Mangum Street for access between East Parrish Street and West Main Street.

Once the project is completed, this green space will feature 12 artistically-designed LED path lights along a newly-designed walkway through the space. In addition, the existing walkway will be reconfigured to include a new, curvilinear path with a new entrance into the space that allows people to enter at the northeast corner from the East Parrish Street and North Mangum Street intersection. At the intersection of the walkway there will also be a larger paved area, creating a "center" for the space and allowing for more movable and stationary seating. The paved center is also expected to be the location of a future public art piece to be added in 2019. The planting of 11 new trees will take place during the City's winter tree planting season, and will provide greater shade for the new open green and central space as well as replace several dead or dying trees. Lastly, a set of colorful porch swings made of recycled milk jugs will also be installed.

"We heard from many of our residents that the space is very dark at night, so we are responding to those concerns to increase the feeling of safety and to encourage greater opportunities for social interaction," said Senior Economic Development Coordinator Brian Smith with the City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development. "The improvements to Black Wall Street Gardens will make the space an even more welcoming and inviting place to gather. New lighting will greatly improve visibility in the space after dark. The addition of a larger center square, more open green space, new seating, and new swings will increase resident opportunities for social gathering, informal performances, and free play."

The total cost of this project is approximately \$60,000, which includes a \$10,000 donation from an anonymous local resident for the walkway improvements. The future public art will be funded from the City's Public Art Fund. The City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development is responsible for the lighting and site improvements while Keep Durham Beautiful and the City's Urban Forestry Division are responsible for the upcoming tree planting. For more information, visit the project web page at <https://durhamnc.gov/3769/Black-Wall-Street-Gardens-Improvements>.

About the City of Durham Office of Economic and Workforce Development

Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the [Office of Economic and Workforce Development](#) helps ensure that Durham has a strong and diverse economy by increasing the city's tax base through

several revitalization initiatives, including new development efforts in the central city area. The department also plans and promotes cultural awareness and events, identifies and recruits target industries as well as assesses and trains Durham residents to fill new jobs.

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